

Bodwell House
15 Middle Street, west side between
Winthrop and Central Streets
Hallowell
Kennebec County
Maine

HABS No. ME-160

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

GOVERNOR JOSEPH R. BODWELL HOUSE

Location: 15 Middle Street (west side of street), Hallowell,
Kennebec County, Maine

Present Owner: Gary F. Elwell

Present Occupant: Gary F. Elwell and family

Present Use: Dwelling

Statement of Significance: The house was remodelled in 1875 in the Mansard or Second Empire style by Joseph R. Bodwell, Governor of Maine (1886-1887) and president of the Hallowell Granite Works. It is the most high-style mansard house in the city of Hallowell, and a major example of the style in Maine.

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8~PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Unknown.
2. Architect, builder, suppliers, etc.: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. References are the offices of the Register of Deeds and Register of Probate, Kennebec County.

1866 Deed. October 25, 1866 recorded October 27, 1866 in Book 258 page 197 (lot with buildings thereon)
Alexander H. Howard and Eunice C. Howard
to
Hannah C. Bodwell, wife of Joseph R. Bodwell of Methuen, Mass.

1926 Deed. November 8, 1926 recorded December 2, 1926 in Book 634 page 471
Charles B. Paine [an administrator of J. R. Bodwell Jr. estate]
to
Vyndel A. Hewes

- 1958 Deed. January 11, 1958 recorded January 13, 1958 in
Book 1102 page 385
Vyndel A. Hewes
to
Clarence E. Allen and Eleanor M. Allen
- 1968 Deed. April 22, 1968 recorded April 22, 1968 in
Book 1465 page 821
Clarence E. Allen and Eleanor M. Allen
to
Robert L. Horning and Elizabeth L. Horning
- 1970 Deed. September 4, 1970 recorded September 9, 1970 in
Book 1530 page 125
Robert L. Horning
to
Gary F. Elwell and Elizabeth L. Horning

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4. Original plans, construction, etc.: None.
5. Alterations and additions: The original house was altered by its 1866 purchaser, J. R. Bodwell, in 1875. It was evidently at this time the house was "mansardized." A notice in the June 5, 1875 Kennebec Journal states that "J. R. Bodwell, Esq., has commenced re-modelling his dwelling house on Middle Street." The July 27 issue reports the work concluded and the "elegant proportions" of the transformed building revealed, but does not specify the changes. The house was a nursing home in the twentieth century and some original internal features were probably removed during this period of occupancy. The first floor of the ell has undergone rearrangement. The original etched glass panels of the front door have been removed; these were duplicates of those surviving in the tower-room doors on the second floor.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Residence of Maine Governor Joseph R. Bodwell from 1866 until his death in 1887.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: House shown in perspective in lithographic Bird's Eye View of Hallowell of 1878.
2. Bibliography:
 - a. Primary and unpublished sources: Kennebec County Registry of Deeds and Registry of Probate, Augusta, Maine 04330.

- b. Secondary and published sources: Kennebec Journal,
June 5, July 27, 1875.

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PART 11. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Joseph R. Bodwell house, in its 1875 form, is a dramatic and richly ornamented example of one of the primary "High" Victorian modes: Mansard or Second Empire, and is remarkable in a community otherwise composed of generically "classical" styles: Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival. Its tall dormered mansard roof and central tower topped with a mansard cupola are primary to its character, especially in its upgrade setting.
2. Condition of fabric: Well-maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This house is approximately 38' x 50' (including projections). It has a modified T-plan (block and rear ell), with three stories in the main block, two in the main ell, and a five-bay facade.
2. Foundations: Granite.
3. Wall construction: Olive green clapboarding with white trim.
4. Framing: Standard light frame construction with wooden studs, joists and rafters.
5. Porches: The side (south) porch is open, three steps above grade, and has a flat roof supported by four ornamented posts on pedestals, the corner posts echoed by pilasters on the wall.
6. Chimneys: The two major chimneys of the main block rise at either end of the lateral axis, standing with the house, and projecting considerably above the mansard roof. They are red brick, and exhibit a curved taper at their tops, with no capping. A smaller chimney rises in the center of the rear ell.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The wooden main (east) door is a two-panel double door, glazed above; it is enframed

by a richly ornamental portal, with pilasters rising to deeply projecting consoles which support a balustraded balcony. The wooden door in the rear ell (south) is four-panel, glazed above, and more simply enframed.

- b. Windows and shutters: A dominant feature of the facade are the two three-sided bays (octagon-section) which flank the center tower portal; these contain four tall and narrow lights, and are capped with bracketed cornices. Other windows fall into three basic types: the taller windows of the ground story, the shorter windows of the second story, and the dormer windows. The first two types are framed by identical moldings which terminate at the top in shouldered triangular pediments, featuring incised ornament beneath the cornices. The dormer windows are more boldly framed by jigsaw-cut jambs; those on the main block also feature triangle-headed upper lights. The windows are double-hung sash, two-lights-over-two. Shutters remain on most but not all of the windows.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Mansard roof, full story in height, on main block, facade tower, and rear ell. Covering is of slate tiles, upper and lower bands conventionally hung, middle band in diagonally reticular pattern.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The major cornice is bracketed with large consoles, and a dentil band runs through the interspaces. The mansard cornice is of classic profile with dentil band.
- c. Dormers: Two dormers occupy each face of the mansard, both on the main block and on the ell.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: Full basement under main block.
- b. First floor: The tower entry-foyer enters a central stairhall which runs the length of the main block on the east-west axis. A double door at the foot of the stairs on the south wall gives access to the main parlor, which occupies the south half of the main block. The double door opposite on the north stairhall wall enters a second parlor which occupies the north-east portion of the main block. Both parlors feature

fireplaces on the outer wall. The dining room occupies HABS the northwest corner of the main block; it communicates ME via doorways with both the stairhall and the adjoining G-HAL parlor. A doorway at the rear of the hall enters the 8- ell, which contains a modern bathroom immediately adjacent to the main block, a stairs in the center to the second floor of the ell, and a kitchen beyond the stairs at the rear (west).

- c. Second floor: A straight run of stairs on the south side of the stairhall ascends, east-west, to the second-floor stairhall. From these, two bedrooms open on either side, the front bedrooms containing outer-wall fireplaces. The tower room is entered through double doors glazed with ruby etched lights. The ell is entered from the west end of the hall, and contains a passage on its north wall which gives access to two chambers on the south and one chamber at the west end--the latter beyond the stairwell from below.
 - d. Attic: None.
2. Stairways: The central stair ascends along the south wall of the hallway through the entire main block, first to third (mansard) floors. Steep, narrow stairs ascend west-east from the third-story hall to the tower room in the cupola.
 3. Flooring: Narrow planking.
 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster and wallpaper.
 5. Doorways and doors: All doors are framed in heavy architraves, have elongated upper and shortened lower recessed panels.
 6. Decorative features and trim: (1) Parlor fireplaces, the south boldly carved in veined white marble, the north encased in uncarved dark veined marble, and both having overmantel mirrors in elaborately carved wood frames. (2) Plaster ceiling rosette in south parlor. (3) Massive newel post, panelled, at bottom of main stairwell (missing finial); decorative balusters. (4) Ruby or Bohemian etched glass panels in second-story tower room door. (5) Decorative stencilling on cupola ceiling and stairwell wall.
 7. Notable hardware: None.
 8. Lighting: Modern electrical fixtures.

9. Heating: Modern central heating.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house is sited on a high embankment above Middle Street, facing east downhill toward the Kennebec River.
2. Enclosures: None.
3. Outbuildings: None.
4. Walks: Cut granite steps ascend the embankment from Middle Street and a walk leads to the main entry.
5. Landscaping: Large trees and shrubbery, arranged informally.

Prepared by Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr.
August 1971
and
Alan Mast
August 1972

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were made during 1971 and 1972 in the course of a photo-data project in the cities of Bath, Hallowell, Monmouth, and Richmond in the State of Maine. The project was arranged in response to the initiative of Mrs. Linda B. Clark of Row House, Inc., in Hallowell, Dr. Charles E. Burden of the Bath Marine Museum, Mrs. Paul L. Roberts of the Richmond Historical and Cultural Society, and Mr. H. Earle Flanders of Monmouth. All of these preservationists actively solicited or contributed funds and effectively fostered increased interest in the architectural heritage of their respective communities. The project was under the general direction of James C. Massey, at that time Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey; was supervised in the field by Denys Peter Myers, then Principal Architectural Historian of HABS; was carried on by Student Architectural Historian Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Boston University; and was continued by Alan Mast, Maine Arts and Humanities Commission, and Mary-Eliza Wengren (Mrs. Richard E., Jr.), Maine Historic Preservation Commission, under the field supervision of Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr. Photographers were Mark C. Bisgrove, Sylvester Cobbs, Stanley Schwartz, Leon P. Shepard, and Richard Dwight Sturgis.